Josiah H. Benton Fd.
Jun 1, 1939
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Wayland, Feb. 5th, 1862.

Dear Mrs. Curtis,

When my precious volume arrived, and I read on its blank leaf, "With love from Anna Shaw Curtis," something new seemed to have danced into the circle of friendship. "Love of Anna Curtis!" I said to myself. "Well, now that is charming! I hardly seem to know her, and yet she sends me a casket of gems with love!"

Then Memory came forward, bringing a succession of pictures, few in number, but vividly painted. First, a beautiful baby in Boston, with large blue eyes that opened upon the world with a prophecy of enjoying "all out doors". Then, a healthy girl in West Roxbury, wading thro' deep snows with boys' boots, and managing horses like a young Amazon, rosy with exercise, happy with the overflow of vigorous young life. Then, a tall young lady just from Europe, fresh as a flower with the morning dew upon it. The expression of the countenance seemed to say, "I find the world a pleasant place, with skies serene as my baby-eyes, and a great play-ground, happy as my childhood."

So much for Memory's pictures to the eye. Then she led me into her whispering-gallery of the Past,

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I heard anecdotes in the dear mother's voice, and again and again repeated, "You don't know, Maria, what a treasure Anna is! She is my sympathizing, reliable companion; more like a sister, than a daughter." So I seemed to know and love this Anna Shaw, though I had so seldom seen her. But now comes Anna Shaw Curtis, leaning on the arm of her handsome, brilliantly-endowed husband, on whose eloquent pages I have so often dwelt admiringly! Fancy must paint that portrait, to hang up with that small gallery, beginning with the lovely baby in Bowdoin St, whose great blue eyes used to bring me messages from the angels. Was he what the blue eyes were looking out into the world for, so calmly, yet so earnestly, when this same Anna, fresh from Swiss mountains and Italian lakes, stood before me, in the graceful vigor of her womanhood? The Prince, on his prancing white charger, was even then being guided by fairies to the Princess all unconscious that union with her was fore-ordained for the completion of his being. And now Fancy brings in pictures of a little prince and princess, with messages from angels in

their eyes, like those that reflected the heavens in the old Bowdoin St days. What am I to do with all these guests of the soul? I open my heart and welcome them all in. Frederika Bremer says: "The human heart is like heaven; the more angels, the more room."

I wrote to your dear mother how I was de-
-lighted with the book you so kindly sent me. The reading of it inspired and invig-
-orated me, much in the same way as it does to look out upon a glorious winter morning, when the air is bracing, the earth covered with spotless ermine, and the trees glittering with diamonds, which the sunlight encircles with prismatic halos. I hardly knew which to admire most in Winthrop, the wealth of his fancy, or the wealth of his culture. Better than either is the high moral elevation, from which he surveys men and things. His great soul is full of freedom, of all noble aims and aspirations. Then he is so vigorous, so super-abounding with life! He ambles, prances wheels, curvets, tosses his mane, and gallops for the love of it, like his

strong, graceful twin-brother, Fulano. Both seem to imply, in all their leaping and gambolling, that there is still a great deal of reserved force to be put forth whenever they choose. Really, to read the book was like riding such a horse, with loose rein, through romantic varieties of scenery. I loved that Fulano, as if he had been a person. Perhaps he was. The larger we humans grow, in our knowledge and our sympathies, the more we shall perceive and delight in our relationship with animals. Prophecies of this we see already in George Sand's birds, Dickens's dogs, and Winthrop's horses.

But I must stop somewhere. So, with renewed thanks for the brilliant book, and for the "love" that sent it, I will bid you an affectionate good-bye, with a blessing on you and yours.

L. Maria Child.

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